

# **Anti-Abortion Movement Led by Obstetrician/Gynecologists in South Korea\***

**Anna Choi, M.D.**

*Dr. Choi is the spokesperson for the Korean Pro-life Doctors Association.*

---

## **Abstract**

*Abortion has been regarded as one of the methods for birth-control in South Korea for decades, since the 1970s when the government encouraged people to choose abortion for the sake of population control during its industrialization process. Most abortions used to be easily performed because doctors or women undergoing abortions were not prosecuted even though abortion was illegal. Even following economic development, such a trend of encouraging abortion was prevalent in our society, and as a result, women used to be compelled by social pressure to undergo abortion.*

On the other hand, illegal abortions had become a major income source for private practitioners because our governmental health insurance system adopted a low-cost policy for practices such as child deliveries. Therefore, many Korean ob/gyns prefer easy lucrative abortions to risky cheap deliveries.

Under such circumstances, a group called “Gyn-Ob” was formed in December 2008 by several ob/gyns who wanted changes in the aberrant and illegal behaviors including prevalent abortion practices. As the group grew, they began their own effort, in October 2009, of refusing abortions and providing only proper, legal medical services.

---

\* Keynote Presentation at the Continuing Medical Education (CME) Conference of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG), Arlington, Virginia, January 29–30, 2011.

In December 2009, the Korean Pro-life Doctors Association (KPDA) was born as a civil organization, and then, launched its anti-abortion movement. As it accused a few abortion clinics and providers, abortion has emerged as a critical issue across the country forcing the government to end up with announcing its counter-plan. However, since there were no harsh punishments for the accused, once-withdrawn providers restarted abortion practices soon after, and consequently the pro-life group became surrounded by more powerful opponents from women's right groups and those physicians who wanted to return to the abortion-friendly environment.

Nevertheless, we see some positive signs now. People who were not well aware of the abortion issue have now become more serious about it. They began to realize that abortion is not necessarily an option that is unavoidable. We will continue our efforts to change our society such that women and ob/gyns feel more comfortable about having babies born. South Korea shall not be called Abortion Republic any longer.